



Five Star Restoration Partnership

National Association of Counties
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Wildlife Habitat Council

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NATION'S STREAMS AND WETLANDS **TO BE RESTORED THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS**

Washington D.C. -- The National Association of Counties, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Wildlife Habitat Council today have awarded over \$600,000 to 60 community-led conservation projects throughout the country. The Five Star Restoration Grant Program will provide \$3,500 - \$20,000 grants to community-based partnerships for support of wetland and streamside restoration projects. Major funding for these grants is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds of the Office of Water, and the NOAA Fisheries' Community-based Restoration Program for select grants in coastal areas. Participating communities have committed nearly \$6.0 million in additional funding and resources to these programs.

Five Star Restoration projects involve a high degree of cooperation, with local government agencies, elected officials, community groups, businesses, schools, and environmental organizations all working together to improve local water quality and restore important fish and wildlife habitats. The winning projects were selected from a competitive pool of over 230 applications. Consideration for funding is based upon the program's educational and training opportunities for students and at-risk youth, the ecological benefits to be derived, and the project's other cultural and economic benefits to the community.

"I applaud the young people across the nation who pitch in to restore wetlands and rivers through the Five Star Program, said EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman. "It is a program that provides the resources for our young citizens to develop work skills and a sense of civic pride as they work to improve water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. We thank the corporations, citizen groups and government agencies who put their support behind this program."

"NOAA Fisheries is proud to be a Five Star partner through our Community-Based Restoration Program," said National Marine Fisheries Service Assistant Administrator (Acting), Bill Hogarth. "The projects that will be accomplished through this partnership will produce on-the-ground results, and help foster an appreciation for the environment in communities across the nation."

Additional funding is provided by the Gulf of Mexico Program, which is a partnership underwritten by EPA, EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lockheed Martin Corporation and PG&E Corporation. This is the third year that grants have been awarded under this innovative program. A list of projects receiving grants is attached.

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